

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JULY 26, 1962

A 220 NY (ADV)

ADVANCE FOR 5:30 P.M. EST THURSDAY JULY 26--NOTE DATE  
 1530J BERDING U2  
 BY LEWIS GELICK

(ADVANCE) WASHINGTON, JULY 26 (AP)--AN EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION PRESS OFFICIAL SAYS PRESIDENT DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER'S PUBLIC ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE U2 FLIGHTS DESTROYED ONE OF THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES IN AMERICA'S DIPLOMATIC HISTORY.

ANDREW BERDING, AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS DURING THE FINAL FOUR YEARS OF THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION, SEVERELY CRITICIZES U.S. HANDLING OF THE MAY 1960 U2 INCIDENT IN A NEW BOOK, "FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND YOU" (DOUBLEDAY, \$4.50).

BERDING'S MAIN PREMISE IS THAT BY SHOULDERING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SPY FLIGHTS OVER RUSSIA, EISENHOWER LOST THE GRAND PRIZE OF A VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION.

EISENHOWER, BERDING SAID, WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONDUCT A TRIUMPHAL TOUR AS COMBINATION U.S. PRESIDENT AND WAR HERO THAT NO OTHER PRESIDENT COULD DO IN THE FORESEENABLE FUTURE.

PICTORING THIS AS A DISASTEROUS TURNING POINT IN EISENHOWER ERA FOREIGN RELATIONS, BERDING SUGGESTS THAT IF EISENHOWER HAD KEPT AWAY FOR THE U2 AFFAIR--AS GOVERNMENTS TRADITIONALLY DO WHEN THEIR SPIES ARE CAUGHT--THE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE COMPLETED HIS TRIP TO JAPAN; ALLIES WOULD NOT HAVE RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT AMERICA'S WISDOM; AND REPUBLICAN RICHARD M. NIXON MIGHT HAVE WON THE 1960 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN WHICH U.S. LEADERSHIP WAS AN ISSUE.

IN A CHAPTER ENTITLED "TRAGEDY AT THE TOP," BERDING SAYS ADVICE TO EISENHOWER TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY CAME FROM A COMBINATION OF STATE DEPARTMENT AND WHITE HOUSE AIDES. HE SAID PRESS HANDLING OF THE INCIDENT WAS "A DISASTER" PARTLY BECAUSE HIS OFFICE WAS NOT CONSULTED.

"ALL THINGS CONSIDERED," BERDING SAID, "I BELIEVE PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S DECISION TO SHOULDER RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE U2 WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST MISTAKES IN THE DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. ..."

"A PERSONAL TRAGEDY RESULTED FOR PRESIDENT EISENHOWER AND THREW A DARK SHADOW OVER THE REMAINING MONTHS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. ..."

IN ANOTHER PORTION OF THE 264-PAGE BOOK, BERDING WRITES OF THE ILL-FATED "U.S.-SPONSORED INVASION OF CUBA BY CUBAN REFUGEES IN 1961" AND CALLS IT "A MAJOR DISASTER FOR US IN WORLD OPINION." HE ADDS:

"PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S HONEST PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF THE MISTAKE AND HIS PERSONAL ACCEPTANCE OF BLAME SMOOTHED SOME OF ITS SHARPER EDGES."

BERDING, AN ASSOCIATED PRESS DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT BEFORE STARTING A CAREER AS A GOVERNMENT INFORMATION OFFICER IN 1947, MADE THESE OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PRESS RELATIONS: